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# GROSS LITERARY FRAUD

## E X P O S E D;

RELATING TO THE PUBLICATION OF

## WORCESTER'S DICTIONARY

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BOSTON:

JENKS, HICKLING, AND SWAN.

1853.

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C A M B R I D G E :  
METCALF AND COMPANY, STEREOTYPER AND PRINTERS.

Cambridge, September 30, 1853.

MESSRS. JENKS, HICKLING, & SWAN:—

GENTLEMEN,—The fact that an edition of my “Universal and Critical Dictionary of the English Language,” with a *false title and a garbled and mutilated preface*, has been published in London, has recently come to my knowledge; and I have had some correspondence on the subject with Mr. Wilkins, of the late firm of Wilkins, Carter, & Co., the original publishers of the Dictionary. As you are now the publishers of it, I send this correspondence to you, together with a correction of some false statements relating to myself, which the publishers of Dr. Webster’s Dictionary have made and circulated very widely, with a request that you will get these matters printed and put in circulation, in order that this literary fraud may be exposed. I am sorry to have occasion to make such a request; but it seems proper that something should be done; and it is my wish that such a course may be adopted as may tend to set matters right, as far as the case admits.

I do not wish any thing ever to be said or done, in order to promote the circulation of my literary publications, that is not in strict accordance with truth and propriety, or that can give reasonable offence to any one. The world is wide enough, and the demand for useful books sufficient, to give employment to all literary laborers, who make use of proper means for preparing books which will promote the improvement of society; and I see no good reason for hostile contention between those who make such books, or between those who sell them.

Respectfully yours,

J. E. WORCESTER.



## LITERARY FRAUD EXPOSED.

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Cambridge, August 24, 1853.

JOHN H. WILKINS, Esq.:—

DEAR SIR,—Not long since I saw, in an English journal, an advertisement of a Dictionary published in London, in the title of which my name was connected with that of Dr. Noah Webster, in a way that I did not understand, and could not account for; and in the Boston Daily Advertiser, of the 5th instant, there is a communication with the signature of G. & C. Merriam, the publishers of Webster's Dictionary, from which the following paragraphs are extracted:—

“Mr. Worcester having been employed by Dr. Webster or his family, to abridge the American Dictionary of the English Language, some years afterwards, and subsequently to Dr. Webster's death, in presenting to the public a Dictionary of his own, of the same size as the Abridgment prepared by him of Webster, says in his Preface, that he ‘is not aware of having taken a single word, or the definition of a word’ from Webster in the preparation of his work.

“Now mark this fact. An edition of Worcester's Dictionary has recently been published in London, and sought to be pushed there, in which the paragraph we have cited is carefully suppressed, and is advertised as ‘Webster's Critical and Pronouncing Dictionary, &c., enlarged and revised by Worcester.’ On the title-page Webster is

placed first, in large type, and Worcester follows in another line in smaller type; and the book is lettered on the back ‘Webster’s and Worcester’s Dictionary’!”

Now this was new and surprising to me; for I did not know that my Dictionary had been published in London. Since seeing this statement, I have called three or four times at your office in Boston to make inquiry of you respecting the matter; but did not find you in till yesterday. I had, however, seen Mr. Rice, who was lately connected with you in business, and he told me that the Dictionary had been published in London, and that he believed you had a copy of the London edition. On seeing you yesterday, you said that you had a copy, and that you would send it to me. I have this morning received it; and I am astonished to find that the title is as follows:—

*“A Universal, Critical, and Pronouncing Dictionary of the English Language: including Scientific Terms, compiled from the materials of NOAH WEBSTER, LL.D. By JOSEPH E. WORCESTER.—New Edition, to which are added Walker’s Key to the Pronunciation of Classical and Scripture Proper Names, enlarged and improved; a Pronouncing Vocabulary of Modern Geographical Names; and an English Grammar.* London: Henry G. Bohn, 4, 5, and 6 York Street, Covent Garden.”

The true title of my Dictionary is as follows:—

*“A Universal and Critical Dictionary of the English Language: to which are added Walker’s Key to the Pronunciation of Classical and Scripture Proper Names, much enlarged and improved; and a Pronouncing Vocabulary of Modern Geographical Names.* By JOSEPH E. WORCESTER.”

I find that the *Preface* is garbled and much altered; and several omissions are made. One of the matters omitted in it is the following statement, viz.:—“*With respect to Webster’s Dictionary, which the compiler several*

*years since abridged, he is not aware of having taken a single word, or the definition of a word, from that work in the preparation of this."*

I do not know that the truth of this statement has ever been explicitly denied, and I do know that it has never been disproved. You will see how inconsistent—how false and injurious—is the statement in the Title of the London edition,—“*compiled from the materials of Noah Webster*”! The person who remodelled the Title and Preface of the London edition, must have known that he was contradicting the statement which I made in my Preface; and the publishers of Webster’s Dictionary are endeavoring to make use of this dishonest proceeding of the London publisher to my injury, and in such a manner as no honorable or honest men would do, if they knew the facts in the case.

I would now ask, what is to be done in this matter? You will not suppose that I ought to feel satisfied to have it remain uncontradicted; yet I am very averse to appear before the public in any controversy relating to a publication of my own. You are aware, as well as other persons who have been concerned in publishing works which I have prepared for the press, that my habit has been to leave my books to the management of the publishers, without defending them from any attack, or doing any thing to injure any works that may come in competition with them; nor do I wish ever to deviate from this course.

As I have no pecuniary interest in the London edition of the Dictionary, I think I am entitled to be protected from being injured by it in this manner; and as you have made the contract, if there has been one made, with the London publisher, I must call your attention to the subject; and I do so in full confidence that you will wish to have the matter set right, and have no wrong done to any one.

Truly yours,

J. E. WORCESTER.

Boston, August 31, 1853.

MR. WORCESTER:—

DEAR SIR,— Your favor of the 24th instant came duly to hand, but I have not had leisure until now to answer it.

Early in 1847, Mr. James Brown, of the firm of Little, Brown, & Co. of this city, was about to visit Europe; and we (Wilkins, Carter, & Co.) authorized him to negotiate for the publication of your Dictionary in England if he had opportunity, and particularly with Mr. Bohn, from whom we had received an application for the privilege. Subsequently Mr. Brown informed us of an offer he had received from Mr. Bohn, and furnished us with the letter from Mr. Bohn to him; to the proposals in which we acceded, and in October of that year shipped the plates to London.

I remember perfectly well that we felt some doubt in regard to the validity of a contract made on paper not bearing a stamp; but we supposed Mr. Bohn was an honorable man, and would not repudiate it.

After shipping the plates we heard nothing from Mr. Bohn until the next year, when we became somewhat impatient of the delay, and we wrote him urging him to go on in fulfilment of his agreement. We received an answer stating that he was sorry the plates had been sent. And we learned that he had become interested in the sale of Webster's Dictionary. Several letters passed between him and us, but we were unable to induce him to fulfil his agreement.

In the autumn of 1849, more than two years after the plates were sent, Mr. Carter went to Europe for his health, — intending to see Mr. Bohn and come to some arrangement with him. But his health did not allow of this. In the summer or autumn of 1850, Mr. Bohn wrote us asking our lowest terms to sell the plates, which I named,— never dreaming that any other use would be made of them than that of publishing your Dictionary under your

name. He accepted my offer, and the transfer of the plates was effected.

On Mr. Carter's return from Italy, in the summer of 1851, he brought home a copy of his (Mr. Bohn's) bare-faced publication. You can judge of our surprise, I might say amazement, at the audacity of this literary fraud. We felt very uncomfortable about it, but did not see that any thing could be done to remedy the evil. Mr. Carter was never afterwards able to attend to business, and the subject of this publication was never further considered between us.

You may well think it strange that I did not at the time call your attention to the subject of this literary imposition; but as I did not see any means of remedying the evil, and knowing that the condition of your eyes was such that you could make but little if any use of them, I did not feel in haste to trouble you with a knowledge of it. I have, however, never seen any notice of this spurious publication in this country, until you called my attention to one. Had any such notice met my eye, I should certainly have deemed it my duty to call your attention to the volume brought home by Mr. Carter.

Had I leisure to narrate the details of our business transaction with Mr. Bohn, I think it would appear to be, on his part, as commercially dishonorable, as this literary enterprise is fraudulent and disgraceful.

Your obedient servant,

JOHN H. WILKINS.

In my letter to Mr. Wilkins, I say, in relation to the statement that "I am not aware of having taken a single word, or the definition of a word, from Dr. Webster's Dictionary, in the preparation of mine," that "I do not know that the truth of this statement had ever been explicitly denied." But the title of the London edition states that my Dictionary was "*compiled from the materials of Noah Webster*"!— and the publishers of Webster's Dictionary

seem to insinuate very strongly, in the paragraphs which I have quoted, as they have also done on other occasions, that the statement is not correct. But if there is a word or the definition of a word that was, in the preparation of my Dictionary, taken from that of Dr. Webster, I am ignorant of the fact. Having had some knowledge of Dr. Webster's readiness to complain of improper use being made of his work,\* I resolved that, in preparing my Dictionary, I would forego all the benefit which might be derived from the use of the materials found in his work, so that I might not give the least occasion for an accusation of the kind, and might be enabled to make the statement which I did make, and which I challenge any one to disprove.

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Having felt it incumbent on me to expose the dishonest proceedings of the London publisher, it may not be improper for me to notice some other false statements, designed to injure me, which the publishers of Webster's Dictionary have repeatedly made and widely circulated. As these statements have not been publicly contradicted, they have doubtless done me injury in the minds of many.

The quotation above made from their communication to the Boston Daily Advertiser begins thus:— “Mr. Worcester having been employed by Dr. Webster or his family to abridge the American Dictionary of the English Language”;— and in their Advertising Pamphlet they say, “Mr. Worcester was employed by Dr. Webster or his family to prepare an Abridgment of the American Dictionary,”— accompanying the statement with injurious reflections. As this statement has been so often made in a form designed to do me injury, and as it is doubtless true that many persons may have been made to believe that there was something wrong or dishonorable on my part, I think it proper that the public should have the means of knowing the facts in the case.

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\* See Appendix.

The statement that I "was employed by Dr. Webster or his family to abridge the American Dictionary," is void of truth. The gentleman who employed me was Sherman Converse, Esq., the original publisher of Dr. Webster's Dictionary. So far was the task from being one of my own seeking, that I declined two applications that were made to me to undertake it, and one reason was the fear that it would bring me into some difficulty or embarrassment in relation to the "Comprehensive Dictionary," which I was then preparing; but the matter was urged upon me by Mr. Converse, after I had stated my objections. If any one shall say that I committed an error in judgment in finally consenting to make the abridgment, I shall certainly, on that point, not contend with him, for it has been to me a matter of much regret that I did so, as may readily be believed from what has taken place. But I am conscious of having acted in good faith in the matter, and of not having deserved ill treatment from Dr. Webster or his friends.

After seeing the publication above referred to in the Daily Advertiser, I sent a copy of it to Mr. Converse, (whom I had seen but once, I believe, for more than fifteen years,) accompanying it with a letter, in which I requested him to give a brief statement of the facts in the case; and I received from him the following letter:—

MR. WORCESTER:—

Newburgh, N. Y., August 31, 1853.

DEAR SIR,— Having been absent from New York for several weeks, I have but just received your favor of the 12th instant, with a copy of the Boston Daily Advertiser accompanying it. I have read the article in the Advertiser, in which your name is coupled with that of the octavo abridgment of Mr. Webster's larger work. Authors are sometimes sensitive, but really I do not think you have much occasion for anxiety in regard to your reputation, either personal or literary. But since you ask me

to say whether I "know of any thing wrong or dishonorable on your part in relation to that Abridgment," I answer, *Nothing whatever.*

The simple history of the whole matter is this. I had published Mr. Webster's great Dictionary, and presented it to the public. The labor had cost from two to three years of the best portion of my business life, without any adequate remuneration. For this I looked to an Abridgment, and such future editions of the larger work as the demand might authorize. But if I published an Abridgment, I wished to stereotype it, and, as a business man, I desired it to be made by an able hand, and with some variations, of minor importance, from the original. On conferring with Mr. Webster upon the subject, he stated two objections to my views. He felt that he had not the physical power left to perform the labor in a reasonable time, and that he could not preserve his literary consistency and be responsible for the variations which I desired. Yet, as I had published the great work after it had been declined, and that not very graciously, by all the principal booksellers on both sides of the Atlantic, he was willing that I should derive any remuneration I might anticipate from an octavo abridgment. With these views and feelings, he consented to commit the subject to the mutual discretion of Professor Goodrich and myself; setting a limit, however, beyond which variations should not be made; and that he might not incur the least responsibility for such variations as the abridgment might contain, I understood him to say, he should give the copyright to another.

As soon as Mr. Webster had made his decision, which was probably a sacrifice of feeling on his part to do me a favor, I applied to *you* to undertake the labor. You declined, and so decidedly that I made a visit to Cambridge for the sole purpose of urging your compliance with my request. You assured me that you could not undertake to abridge Mr. Webster's Dictionary, for the very good

reason that you had then already made considerable progress in preparing a Dictionary of your own. At the same time, you showed me a Synopsis of words of disputed pronunciation, with the respective authorities. But the result of our interview was an agreement on your part to abridge the Dictionary for me, and to allow me to use your Synopsis, with the express reservation of the right to use it as your own, for your own Dictionary. And I must say that my persuasive powers were very severely taxed in securing the desired result.

I returned to New Haven, and subsequently called on you in company with Mr. Goodrich, when the matter of variations was settled, and you entered upon the labor; and I am free to say you performed it to my entire satisfaction, and I believe to that of Professor Goodrich also, for I never heard an intimation to the contrary.

I am very faithfully yours,

S. CONVERSE.

It may not perhaps be improper for me to give brief extracts from letters which I received from Dr. Webster and Professor Goodrich, very soon after they had been informed that I "had consented to undertake the abridgment."

The following is an extract from a letter of Dr. Webster to me, dated New Haven, July 27, 1828:—

"Sir,—Mr. Converse has engaged you to abridge my Dictionary, and has requested me to forward you the copy of the first volume. This was unexpected to me; but under the circumstances, I have consented to it, and shall send the copy."

The following is an extract from a letter of Professor Goodrich to me, dated Yale College, July 28, 1828:—

"My dear Sir,—Mr. Converse, who was here on Saturday, informed us that you had consented to undertake the abridgment of Mr. Webster's Dictionary. This gives me

and Mr. Webster's other friends the highest satisfaction; for there is no man in the United States, as you know from conversation with me, who would be equally acceptable."

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The publishers of Webster's Dictionary, in order to make it appear that I have been inconsistent with myself in relation to *orthography*, say: "In 1827, an edition of Todd's Johnson's Dictionary, 1 vol. 8vo, was published in Boston, of which Mr. Worcester was the American editor. *Having the entire control of the matter*, he retained the *k* in words terminating in *c*, as *musick*, *physick*, *almanack*, &c., and the *u* in *honour*, *favour*, *authour*, and that large class of words." And they say further, in relation to orthography: "Worcester, not guided by any system or principles of his own, but seeking to fall in with the constantly changing practice of the hour," &c.

"Johnson's English Dictionary, as improved by Todd and abridged by Chalmers, with Walker's Pronouncing Dictionary combined," first published in Boston in 1827, was edited by me on principles fixed upon by the publishers and some literary gentlemen, who were their counsellors in the matter; and of these counsellors, the one who did the most in the business was the late learned and much respected Mr. John Pickering. It was made my duty to conform to the principles established for my guidance; and *I had no "control of the matter."* The Dictionary was to contain *Johnson's orthography*, and *Walker's pronunciation*. I was so far from defending the use of the final *k* in *music*, *physic*, &c., that I said in relation to it, in my Preface to that Dictionary: "The general usage, both in England and America, is at present so strongly in favor of its omission, that the retaining of it seems now to savor of affectation or singularity."

As the orthography of this Dictionary was that of Johnson, so the orthography of the Abridgment of Webster's Dictionary made by me, was that of Webster, with some

variations which were decided upon by "his representative," and over which I had no control. The only orthography for which I am responsible is that found in my own Dictionaries.

These publishers further charge me with "adopting several of Dr. Webster's peculiarities, omitting the *k* and *u*," &c. I am not aware of having adopted any of Dr. Webster's "peculiarities" relating either to orthography or pronunciation; and if any such can be found in my Dictionary, I should certainly not regard them as adding to the value of the work.

With respect to the omission of *k* in *music, public, &c.*, it may be stated, in addition to what is said above, that it was omitted in that class of words in Martin's English Dictionary, published in 1749, before that of Johnson; and it has been omitted in many other Dictionaries published since; and the omission of *u* in *honor, favor, &c.* was countenanced in the Dictionaries of Ash and Entick, published long before that of Dr. Webster. The fact that this orthography was the prevailing usage with the best authors in this country was a good reason for adopting it.

There are other falsehoods relating to me, contained in the Advertising Pamphlet of these publishers, which I pass by without particular notice.

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With respect to the manner in which my Dictionary has generally been noticed in Reviews and Literary Journals, so far as I have seen such notices, I have reason to be entirely satisfied. There is, however, an article upon it in the American Review, published in New York, (written, as I have been informed, by a Professor at New Haven, at the time when the new edition of Dr. Webster's Dictionary was preparing at that place,) which is in remarkable contrast to any other review of the work that I have seen. The reputed author of this article has been employed by the publishers of Dr. Webster's Dictionary as a public

advocate of that work; and his notice of mine is so much to their purpose, that they have seen fit to insert a great part of it in their Advertising Pamphlet. Considering the circumstances under which this article was written, and the manifest object of it, such of the alleged imperfections in the Dictionary as are founded in truth, are not greater or more numerous than might reasonably be expected.

As a specimen of the candor and truthfulness of the writer of this review, I quote a part of what he says in relation to what the author of the Dictionary has done with respect to words differently pronounced by different orthoëpists:—"He has," says the reviewer, "collected and attached to every important word, every method of pronouncing it that has ever been recommended by a writer, whether great or small, conceited or well-informed, judicious or affected."

Now the following is the true statement of what is done, in the Dictionary, in relation to words differently pronounced by different orthoëpists, as may be seen on page xxiv.:—"The English authorities most frequently cited in this volume are Sheridan, Walker, Perry, Jones, Enfield, Fulton and Knight, Jameson, Knowles, Smart, and Reid, all of whom are authors of Pronouncing Dictionaries. In addition to these, various other English lexicographers and orthoëpists are frequently brought forward, as Bailey, Johnson, Kenrick, Ash, Dyche, Barclay, Entick, Scott, Nares, Maunder, Crabb, and several others; besides the distinguished American lexicographer, Dr. Webster."

There has been, as I have understood, considerable controversy relating to the Dictionaries in the newspapers and literary journals, particularly in the city of New York; but it took place when I had little use of my eyesight, and I have seen little of it. While my Dictionary was passing through the press, one of my eyes became blind by a cata-

ract, and not a great while after, the sight of the other eye was lost in the same way; and though my eyesight has been in some measure restored, yet for a great portion of the time since its failure, I have been able to do little or nothing as a student; so that it has been impossible for me to make such a revision of my different publications, as I might otherwise have done.

The manner in which my literary productions have generally been noticed by the press and patronized by the public, calls for the expression of gratitude much more than for complaint. It is with great reluctance that I have been induced to appear before the public in a manner that may savor so much of egotism; but the base conduct of the London publisher especially seemed to render it necessary that something should be done; and I trust that nothing which has here been said in my defence will be found inconsistent with truth or propriety. I have acted wholly on the defensive, and I have no disposition "to dip my pen in gall," or to make a hostile attack on any one, or to speak disparagingly of any publication that may come in competition with mine. I have not, so far as I know, ever seen or ever injured any one of the persons on whose course I have made strictures. Whether their consciences are at ease in this matter or not, is a question that concerns themselves more than it does me. For myself, I would rather be the subject than the perpetrator of such falsehood and wrong.

J. E. WORCESTER.

## A P P E N D I X.

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As the question respecting the use made of “the materials of Dr. Webster” has become one of so much importance, I have thought, on further reflection, that it is proper the public should have the means of better understanding the reasons which induced me to take the course which I did, in preparing my “Universal and Critical Dictionary.” My course, which was known to some of my literary friends, was objected to; for I was told that, by totally abstaining from such use of Dr. Webster’s Dictionary, I deprived myself of advantages for improving my own, which I might, to some extent, without impropriety, avail myself of; but I was sure, from what had already taken place, that I could not make such use, to a degree that would be of any benefit to me, without subjecting myself to such reproach as would be very unpleasant. I therefore merely cited Dr. Webster’s authority in relation to words differently pronounced by different orthoépists.

The necessity, in order to avoid reproach, of my taking the course I did in relation to the *Universal Dictionary*, must be sufficiently obvious to all who know what took place with respect to my previous work, entitled the *Comprehensive Dictionary*, which was first published in 1830. In November, 1834, there appeared in the “Worcester Palladium,” (a newspaper published at Worcester, Mass.,) at the instigation, as I was informed, of an agent for Dr. Webster’s Dictionaries, an attack upon me, in which the following language was used:—“*A gross plagiarism has been committed by Mr. J. E. Worcester on the literary property of Noah Webster, Esq. . . . Mr. Worcester, after having become acquainted with Mr. Webster’s plan, immediately set about appropriating to his own benefit the valuable labors, acquisitions, and productions of Mr. Webster. . . . If we had a statute which could fix its grasp on those who pilfer the products of mind, as readily as our laws embrace the common thief, Mr. Worcester would hardly escape with a light mulct.*”

At this time the “Christian Register,” published in Boston, was

edited by Professor Sidney Willard, who happened to be as well acquainted with my lexicographical labors and the circumstances relating to them, as almost any gentleman in the community; and he answered this (as he styled it) "ferocious assault," in such a manner as he thought proper, before I had any knowledge that such an assault had been made. In order to sustain his accusation, the editor of the Palladium enumerated *twenty-one words*, which he said "are found in none of the English Dictionaries in common use, and were undoubtedly taken from Webster's." I thought proper to send to the editor an answer to his attack. In a succeeding number of the Palladium, there appeared a short letter to the editor from Dr. Webster, dated New Haven, December 11th, 1834, in which he said, "That he [Worcester] borrowed some words and definitions, I suppose to be proved by the fact that they are found in no British Dictionary; at least in none that I have seen." Subsequently there appeared, in the Palladium, a letter from Dr. Webster, addressed to me, dated January 25th, 1835. This was followed by an answer from me, dated February 6th. Two more letters from Dr. Webster followed, together with my answers. The editor of the Christian Register transferred the whole correspondence into his paper.

By perusing all that appeared in these two newspapers, the Palladium and the Register, the reader would have the means of judging of the merits of the case, and would be able to understand something of the circumstances and reasons which induced me to take the course of abstaining entirely from the use of the materials found in Dr. Webster's Dictionary. But as it might tax the patience of the reader too much to place before him all this matter (which may be seen by examining the files of those newspapers), I will now insert Dr. Webster's first letter to me, dated January 25, together with my answer. This letter contains Dr. Webster's chief specifications against me, — a list of 121 words, "which," he said, "*primâ facie*, would seem to be taken from his Dictionary." In his subsequent letters, he did not specify any more words as borrowed from him; and the only word specified, with respect to which he accused me of "*adding his definitions*," was the word *clapboard*; and in that, I may say, he succeeded no better in his evidence, than with respect to the charge of borrowing the 121 words. The reader will please to compare the specifications and the evidence with the charges against me, quoted from the Worcester Palladium, and characterize the whole transaction as he may see fit.

## M R. W E B S T E R ' S L E T T E R .

*From the Worcester Palladium.*

New Haven, January 25, 1835.

MR. J. E. WORCESTER:—

SIR,—Before I saw, in the Worcester Palladium, a charge against you of committing plagiarism on my Dictionary, I had not given much attention to your Dictionary. Nor have I now read and compared with mine one tenth part of the work. But in running over it, in a cursory manner, I have collected the following words, which, *primâ facie*, would seem to have been taken from my Dictionary:—

Abatable	Hydrant	Olivaceous
Assignor	Irredeemable	Ophiologist
Augean	Instanter	Ophiology
Bateau	Isothermal	Philosophism
Cartrut	Johannes	Phosphoresce
Caucus	Judiciary ( <i>noun</i> )	Phosphorescence
Chowder	Kumiss	Phosphorescent
Congregationalist	Land-office	Prayerful
Congressional	Lapstone	Prayerless
Clapboard	Landslip	Promissee
Dell	Leach	Pappoose
Dutiable	Leachtub	Pistareen
Deliquesce	Magnetize	Pledgee
Digraph	Mazology	Postfix
Emphasize	Mishna	Postnote
Effloresce	Moccason	Raca
Educational	Monitorial	Ramadan
Effervescent	Muscovado	Razee
Electioneer	Muskrat, <i>or</i>	Redemptioner
Farrow	Musquash	Rhabdology
Fructescence	Notarial	Rock-crystal
Fracas	Neap ( <i>of a cart, &amp;c.</i> )	Roil, roily
Glazing	Neptunian	Repealable
Governmental	Outlay	Safety-valve
Grandjury	Obsidian	Semiannual
Graphite	Obstetrics	Sectional
Griddle	Ochlocracy	Sabianism

Saltrheum	Succotash	Tuffoon
Savings-bank	Selectman	Uranology
Scorify	Sparse	Varioloid
Scow	Sou	Vapor-bath
Sheepshead	Souvenir	Vermivorous
Spry	Suffix, <i>n. &amp; v.</i>	Vishna
Squirm	Tirade	Voltaism
Spinning-jenny	Tenderloin	Volcanist
Spinning-wheel	Teraphim	Waffle
Seraskier	Test, <i>v.</i>	Whiffletree
Siderography	Thammuz	Wilt
Siderographical	Tetaug	Winter-kill
Slump	Tomato	Zumology.

I will thank you, Sir, to state in what other Dictionary, except mine, you found the foregoing words, and how many or which you borrowed from mine.

Your compliance with this request will oblige

Your humble servant,

N. WEBSTER.

#### MR. WORCESTER'S ANSWER.

Cambridge, February 6, 1835.

DR. NOAH WEBSTER:—

SIR,—On Friday last I received a copy of the Worcester Palladium, in which was found a letter addressed by you to me, containing a list of one hundred and twenty-one words from my Dictionary, “which,” you say, “*primâ facie*, would seem to have been taken from your Dictionary”; and you add that you “will thank me to state in what other Dictionary, except yours, I found the words, and how many or which I borrowed from yours.”

As a lawyer, Sir, you are aware, that, when an accusation is made, the burden of the proof lies not with the accused, but with the accuser. It might not, therefore, perhaps be improper for me to take the ground that your request is an unreasonable one, and for that reason to decline to comply with it. I will not, however, avail myself of this right. I think I may truly say that in my transactions with you, it has been my intention to act uprightly and faithfully, nor do I know that an individual of those who are most acquainted with the facts (yourself excepted) has a different impres-

sion. In answer to the charges which have appeared against me in the Worcester Palladium, I have already made some statements of facts, none of which, so far as I know, have been, or can be, disproved. You now call for something further, and it shall be cheerfully granted. I feel indeed gratified by the manner in which you have been pleased to make the request; for though I have no love of contention, yet if I must be dragged into a newspaper controversy in defence of myself in this matter, I should prefer that, of all men in the world, it should be with yourself, writing under your own name.

You evidently supposed, Sir, that none of the words in your list were to be found in any Dictionary that was published before the appearance of your work; but I confess I am somewhat surprised at this fact, inasmuch as, from your reputation as a lexicographer, it might naturally be supposed that you were extensively acquainted with works of this sort, and especially with the works which are so well known to all persons who have any just pretensions to much knowledge of this kind of literature, as are the several publications which I shall name. I shall not go out of my own library, or mention any work that I was not in the habit of consulting in preparing my Dictionary.

Of the *one hundred and twenty-one* words in your list, *eighteen* are found in an edition of Bailey's Dictionary, published more than a century ago, and *twenty-one* in a later edition; *thirty-five*, in Ash's Dictionary, published in 1775; *thirty-seven*, in Todd's Johnson's Dictionary combined with Walker's, edited by *J. E. Worcester*, and published before the appearance of yours; *twenty-one*, in Mr. Pickering's Vocabulary, published in 1816; not less than *thirty* in the Encyclopædia Americana, and nearly as many in Brewster's New Edinburgh Encyclopædia;—and in these several works, upwards of *ninety* of the words are found, and many of them several times repeated. I have, in addition to the works above mentioned, about fifty English Dictionaries and Glossaries, in a majority of which I have ascertained that more or less of the words in question are to be found, but I have not leisure, at present, to go through a minute examination of them.

Of your hundred and twenty-one words, *six or seven* are not to be found, so far as I can discover, in your Quarto Dictionary, and one of them is one of those *three thousand words* which are contained in Todd's Johnson's Dictionary, but are *not* to be found in your

great work, and which were inserted by me in the octavo abridgment of your Dictionary. Whether any of the others are among the words which were inserted in the abridgment at my suggestion, I cannot say with certainty.

From the preceding statement, you may perceive, Sir, that your *prima facie* evidence is sufficiently disposed of, as it respects the most of the words in question. You inquire "in what other *Dictionary*" the words are to be found; and in your former communication to the Worcester Palladium, you were so candid as to say, "that I borrowed some words from you, you suppose to be *proved* by the fact that they are found in no British Dictionary; at least in none that you have seen." Now, Sir, it appears to me that it would be quite as sound logic to infer from the above statements, that you have not seen, or at least have not carefully examined, many British Dictionaries, as it would to infer, with respect to a list of words, that because you do not know of their existence in British Dictionaries, they must, therefore, have been taken from yours; for it appears sufficiently evident that there may be words in British Dictionaries that you are not aware of. You seem also to have overlooked the circumstance that there are, besides Dictionaries, other sources for obtaining words, which are open to me, as well as to you; and if my success in finding words *out of* Dictionaries should bear as good a comparison with yours, as it seems to bear in finding the words in question *in them* (I only put the case hypothetically), it would not appear very wonderful, if I were able to find the few remaining words without any assistance from your labors. Of the hundred and twenty-one words, you have given authorities, in your Dictionary, for only thirty-nine; but I can, without going out of my own library, furnish authorities, in all cases different from yours, for upwards of a hundred of them.

With respect to your inquiry, how many or which words I borrowed from you, I have already said that I did not know that a single one was inserted on your sole authority. I do not affirm this to have been the fact, for I am aware that oversights of this sort may happen; but if any have been so inserted, I sincerely regret the circumstance, and will engage to erase from my Dictionary every word that you will prove to have been thus inserted. But if I saw in your Dictionary a word with which I was familiar, or which I knew was in established use, or found in respectable authors, I regarded it as a word belonging, not exclusively to any individual, but to all who



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write and speak the language, to be used by them on all proper occasions, even though it was not to be found in any Dictionary but yours. Take, for example, the very common compound word *semi-annual*, one in your list, which is not to be found in any of the English Dictionaries that I have examined, and you are entitled to the merit, so far as I know, of having been the first to insert this word in a Dictionary; yet you cannot doubt that I was familiar with this word before your Dictionary was published; and as I have had occasion to use it repeatedly in my other publications, I thought myself authorized to insert it also in my Dictionary. All the words in your own Dictionary were surely to be found in Dictionaries previously published, or had been previously used by other persons, except such as you coined or stamped anew, in order to enrich or embellish the language; and with regard to all words which owed their origin or new form to you, such as *ammony*, *bridegoom*, *canail*, *ieland*, *naivty*, *nightmar*, *prosopopy*, &c., it has been my intention scrupulously to avoid, as being your own property, and I have not even inserted them in my Vocabulary of Words of Various Orthography, being willing that you should for ever have the entire and exclusive possession and use of them. There is a considerable number of words in my Dictionary which are not to be found in yours; yet they have all, I believe, had the sanction of respectable usage: I can therefore claim no exclusive property in them; and you are perfectly welcome, as I have before intimated to you, to have them all inserted in your Dictionary.

Should you be disposed, Sir, to pursue the examination of my Dictionary further, and honor me with any more of your inquiries, I will attend to them as promptly as my engagements may render it convenient.

Having paid such attention to your request as my engagements have permitted, and answered your inquiry, in some measure, I trust, to your satisfaction, I would now, Sir, respectfully make a request of you, which is, *that you would be so good as to inform me whether the charges against me in the Worcester Palladium were occasioned by any statements made by you, or whether you have ever made, or are now ready to make, any such statements.*

Your compliance with this request will oblige

Your humble servant,

J. E. WORCESTER.



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